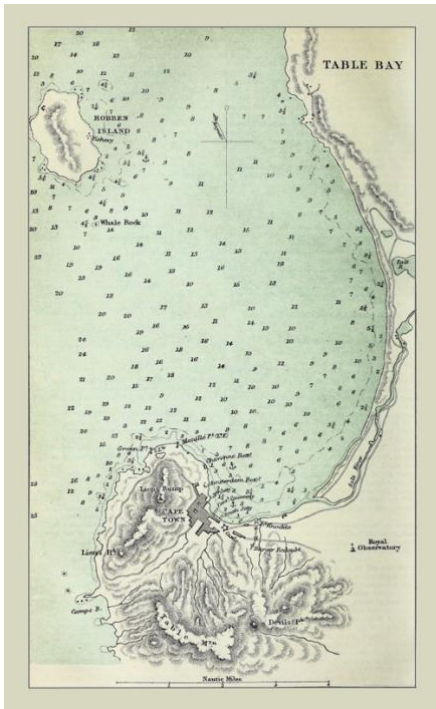


Map Information Sheet

Map of Table Bay



Author:	McCulloch, J. R. (John Ramsay), 1789-1864
Date of Publication:	1880
Publisher:	Longmans, London
Original Size:	

Description

The 1880 map of **Table Bay**, published in J.R. McCulloch's Dictionary, Practical, Theoretical and Historical of Commerce and Commercial Navigation, is a small, utilitarian plate focused on Table Bay's hydrography: it delineates Table Bay and Robben Island with depth soundings across the bay, and sketches key landmarks - Table Mountain, Lion's Head, Devil's Peak, and Salt River - as coastal and inland references for mariners. It serves as a practical locator for ships approaching the anchorage rather than a town or port-development plan, reflecting the dictionary's commercial-navigational purpose and late-Victorian preference for concise, serviceable cartography. The inclusion of this map in McCulloch's globally distributed reference work underscored Cape Town's enduring significance as Britain's maritime outpost and trading hub - linking Europe, Asia, and the resource-rich interior newly awakened by the diamond boom at Kimberley.

Cartographic Content

- **Table Bay:** Depicted with its breakwater, anchorage zones, and shipping berths.
- **Topography:** Landmarks such as Table Mountain, Signal Hill, and Lion's Head are included for orientation.
- **Cartographic Style:** The engraving is precise and utilitarian, designed to provide practical information for merchants and navigators. Decorative cartouches or flourishes, common in earlier centuries, are absent - replaced by a focus on accuracy and utility.

Significance

1. **Commercial Atlas Tradition:**
 - The map is not an isolated work of geography but part of a broader commercial-geographical reference system that served Britain's global trading elite.
2. **Colonial Showcase:**
 - By highlighting Cape Town's modern docks and railways, the map functioned as a visual showcase of British engineering and colonial progress in Africa.

3. Historical Transition:

- The map captures Cape Town on the eve of major change: within a decade, the discovery of gold in the Transvaal (1886) would accelerate Johannesburg's rise, but Cape Town remained the premier maritime port of the region.

Historical Context

- **The Cape in 1880:**

- Cape Town, under British colonial rule since 1806, had by the late 19th century become a thriving entrepôt between Europe and Asia.
- The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 reduced the Cape's prominence as a mandatory stop, but the colony reinvented itself as a supplier of coal, fresh produce, and dockyard services to passing steamships.
- By 1880, the South African mineral revolution was underway (diamonds discovered in Kimberley in 1867, and gold in 1886). Cape Town's port was increasingly important for shipping goods and people to and from the interior.

- **Commercial Importance of the Map:**

- McCulloch's *Dictionary of Commerce* was a key global reference work for merchants. The inclusion of a Cape Town map signalled the port's strategic and commercial significance within world trade.
- The detail on docks, shipping facilities, and transport links reflects how Cape Town was marketed to international traders as a modern and reliable harbour.

- **Colonial Infrastructure:**

- The Alfred Dock (1870) was the first deep-water dock in South Africa, allowing large steamships to berth directly, marking a turning point in the Cape's maritime capacity.
- The railway system, begun in the 1860s, connected Cape Town with Stellenbosch, Worcester, and later Kimberley, making it the main funnel for exports and imports.
- The map reflects these infrastructural developments, positioning Cape Town as a colonial metropolis and gateway to southern Africa.



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